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News Release

Local Foods Partnership Connects Growers and Consumers

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Northwestern, Minn. - Imagine. The sun shines warmly upon your back. A cool breeze works its way across your face. You hear the snap of the vine, and then you take a bite. It's juicy, it's sweet, and it's tangy. It tastes like summer.

For a local grower, the rewards of the first, freshly picked strawberry are magical. Sure, strawberries are available year round in the grocery store, but in northwestern Minnesota, that first strawberry is warm and fresh. It hasn't traveled over a thousand miles to get here.

Strawberries are only one of many products that are locally available this time of year. Rhubarb, radishes, and salad greens such as lettuce, spinach, and swiss chard are also abundant. If you really want to tantalize your taste buds, try eating samples of a few different kinds of salad greens plain. Experience the unique flavor of each different type and then mix and match your favorites to create a salad all of your own.

You might think that fresh, local produce is hard to find, but the University of Minnesota Northwest Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership has made it easy. They created a website called Local Foods Partnership (<http://www.localfoods.umn.edu>) to connect local growers with local consumers. The website lists producers, processors, and farmer's markets near you. You can search the website to find a grower near you or you can search for a specific product to see who produces it.

The next time you're in the grocery store buying produce, take a moment to stop and think about where that baby spinach came from, or how long that poor tomato has traveled to be placed in front of you. Take a moment to remember that you probably already know someone who grows your favorite veggies, check out the local foods website, and then savor the flavors of summer.

The Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership connects resources of the region and the University of Minnesota to develop a sustainable regional community by empowering citizens to explore and act on their ideas.

For more information, please contact Linda Kingery, Executive Director, Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership – 877-854-7737 or kinge002@umn.edu

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